

AKA! NAKAGAWA! GREAT SASUKE! DYNAMITE KID! wotta week!- and other stuff I saw and heard this week.

Howdy!

I had a bittersweet week of tape veiwing since a lot of it was from the 80's- and if ever there was a hit and miss decade, that was it.

- I watched a few zillion hours of Pro Wrestling This Week from 1988- up to Bruiser Brody's death. This was Joe Pedicino's great syndicated show that was a sampler of basically all independent wrestling every week. The show was so chock full of love for the sport that one can overlook the usually subpar action that was offered up. The late 80's indie scene was great for angles, pretty bad for wrestling- my favorite being the Dirty White Boy and White Girl angle from CWF in Alabama where White Girl, sporting a blackeye, pleads with a face Tom Pritchard to save her from more beatings from White Boy. Pritchard is giving her a stern lecture about straightening out her life when, of course, when the future P L Hopper commences to beating the crap out of him with a chair. He then proceeds to cut off his hair and string him up with a noose. All the while, White Girl is laughing and kicking the future Bodydonna. Now that was good old fashioned hardcore redneck violence. The crappiest parts of the show are when they would show some horrendous WWF match. I am sometimes down on today's WWF, but compared to the shit they used to shovel out (I saw a Hercules vs Duggan match, and StrikeForce twice!) today's WWF is All-Japan Carnival 365 days a year. It was definitely cool seeing a formative Paul Heyman, learning how to be a heat machine in front of a batch of Alabamans. And I never want to see Playboy Buddy Rose's big fat hinder ever again (and I thought Flair's flabby ass on my TV screen was bad enough.) The most touching show was the tribute to Bruiser Brody, about a week after he died and the honest rage of Jerry Blackwell over the ordeal; it was very heartfelt and beautifully done. I'm also guessing that Paul Heyman is the only man to be kissed by Bruiser Brodie on national TV.

- I saw a Dynamite Kid vs George Takano as Cobra match from 1984 and GEEEEZ! I sometimes forget how awesome the Dynamite Kid was in his prime. The added attraction was that he was totally bald (as was Davy Boy Smith in his match on that tape- YIKES!). I think this match was better than most TigerMask/Dynamite Kid matches I've seen. Much stiffer, with great psychology on both sides, as opposed to Kid dictating the pace and trying to keep a handle on Sayama. And Dynamite Kid goes to one knee to block a piledriver like somebody else does now.:) Benoit still has a couple of steps to go to reach Dynamite's level of arrogance, even if he has at least matched his intensity. Also on that tape were three David Schultz matches, who I had not really seen other than when he slapped the hell out of that idiot reporter and got banned for life. God! These were pretty choice, pretty technically sound for a redneck ass-stomper, and his match tagging with Larry Coage against Inoki and Fujinami was downright brutal.

- I watched NWA True Grit from 1988 and that brought back a lot of good memories. I was in college and I would go get drunk at parties when all music and talking stopped as everyone would stop and marvel at the Flair intervei on TV at one in the morning. NWA would come to the Richmond Coliseum every month and we would get ten people together and go. We would

make a cretinously drunken roadtrip to Charlottesville to see the Great Muta at U-Hall. It was a golden time. The main thing that struck me about this PPV was that every match was good from top to bottom with the cream of the crop being the Fantastics vs Steve Williams/Kevin Sullivan and a truly great Barry Windham/BamBam Bigelow match. It is easy to forget that for a short while in the late eighties, Barry Windham was THE best wrestler in North America and if you need any proof, see this match. Workrate, intensity, stiffness, psychology- he had it all for a short while. Flair also dragged Luger's loser ass to a great match.

- Bushy Tail also sent me a truly weird Sheik special on Big Time Wrestling from 1976. It had matches from the sixties and early seventies, with the Sheik executing some pretty nifty moves. After all the Pogo I've seen, its kind of weird to believe how horrified I was as a kid when he would use that flash paper to burn people's faces. It was neat to see the pre- "I like to Hurt People" Sheik, especially since it spared us the movie's spectacularly horrible soundtrack. The ads for Cobo arena "with girls, a six man midgets match and over 40 stars" are priceless.

- I watched the 5/5/96 FMW show that St. Phil sent me and it was about as hit and miss as any FMW tape with the highlights being the Kudo/Combat Toyota Exploding Barb wire match, the Cactus Jack swansong and the truly fantabulous TAKA Michinoku/Koji Nakagawa match which sported three TAKAbombs and impressive wrestling all around. The Cactus match made me happy that he is Mankind now and will be able to prolong his career for a few years because I don't know how many more bumps he could take like these. I'm convinced that Kanemura enjoys being bodyslammed into barbed wire and spidernet, that can be the only explanation for anyone allowing this much pain and agony to be inflicted upon one's body. The Pogo match was irritating because Pogo once again carves up a wrestler who can work circles around most people in the sport when he takes the sickle to Tanaka. The Kudo/Combat match reminded me of a Tenryu/Onita EBW Cage match I saw once that was cool because there was so much actual wrestling in it that you forget its an exploding barbed wire match, so when they hit the wire, the explosion is that much more impressive. This is definitely the most brutal match I've ever seen involving two women (including Hotta/Candori), maybe the most overall involving two people who are actual, card carrying wrestlers. I have to disagree with Phil when he said that the EBW was more horrifying than the two backdrop drivers at the end. I think I would definitely want to go head first into the barbed wire than get that next to last backdrop driver. That looked career-ending. GAEA just rules at every level. The Chigusa/Shark Ichyu... Ichuy... Ms. Pogo match was also pushing the limits of what I can take in a woman's match. Chigusa is so cool, and is the perfect face, and I hate to see her blade or juice hardway. I was still entranced by the GAEA matches far more than the men's matches (except for the TAKA/Nakagawa and the fabulous Hayato match (who was that masked man who beat the hell out of him? Between Hayato and Ooya I don't know who the biggest pretty boy in FMW is.)

- I started watching a gargantuan Japanese tape and saw the fabulous TAKA/Great Sasuke match. If anyone ever thought that Sasuke couldn't have a great match without the Sasuke Special look no further than this match. All the bumps were within the non-life-threatening range and it was as intense in the end as any other match I've seen these two in.

- This was a pretty crappy week for free TV wrestling with the best being the Malenko/Regal match. I love the way Malenko can cover up for a subpar middle of a match by kicking it into overdrive at the end (see his match against Liger on Nitro.) I didn't see SummerSlam, being the Bizarro World John Petrie (I must get every WCW PPV, but never get WWF PPVs) but am looking forward to seeing the Mero Shooting Star Press.

All in all, it was a great week to be a tape trader!

NANIWA~!

- Dean Rasmussen, Super Caloiac!